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HELPERS AMONG US — NEWS

Helpers Among Us - Alisa Dong needs your help with Thanksgiving food drive

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

November 18, 2025 . 5:56 PM — 2 min read

Alisa Dong wants your help in donating food or money to provide Thanksgiving meals for food-insecure residents. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/JOYCE WESTNER

Standish Lane resident Alisa Dong has only lived in town for abo
years, but she's already immersed in helping people. And she wa

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residents to help her provide Thanksgiving Day meals for local food-insecure residents.

A member of the town's Family Action Network (FAN), Dong is its community connections chair.

"The First Congregational Church is generously allowing us to use their facility to accept donations from residents, and also to sort them," she says. "We'll do that Saturday morning, and we hope to have enough food to make 50 traditional Thanksgiving dinners."

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FAMILY ACTION NETWORK of Winchester
2025 Thanksgiving Basket Food Drive
Help make Thanksgiving a little brighter for our neighbors!
All donations will go to the Woburn's Council for Social Concern
Scan the QR code to see the list of requested items, and drop off donations by Thursday, November 20th at First Congregational Church or 25 York Road
No time to shop or assemble?
Donate funds: Venmo @FANWinchester
See FAN website for sign up links and additional information

Looking to help with the FAN food drive? Here s how. COURTESY PHOTO/ALISA DONG

Asked who gets the dinner ingredients, Dong says they'll take them next Tuesday to the Woburn Council of Social Concern.

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“It’s a big event, sorting the donations,” she says. “It takes a lot of organization.”

Dong is no stranger to organizing things, having a degree in gene therapy and hematology. She’s currently on family leave from her job at Pulmovant, and is home with her pre-school aged son and her 3-month-old daughter.

When asked how she got the position of community connections chair, she said she was on the committee and as people aged out of FAN, she took on the role.

“I couldn’t do all of this without the other committee members Michelle Ellis and Carrie Monks,” she says.

The group is also looking for gift cards.

“We can’t provide fresh food,” she says, “so the recipients have to buy their own turkeys.”

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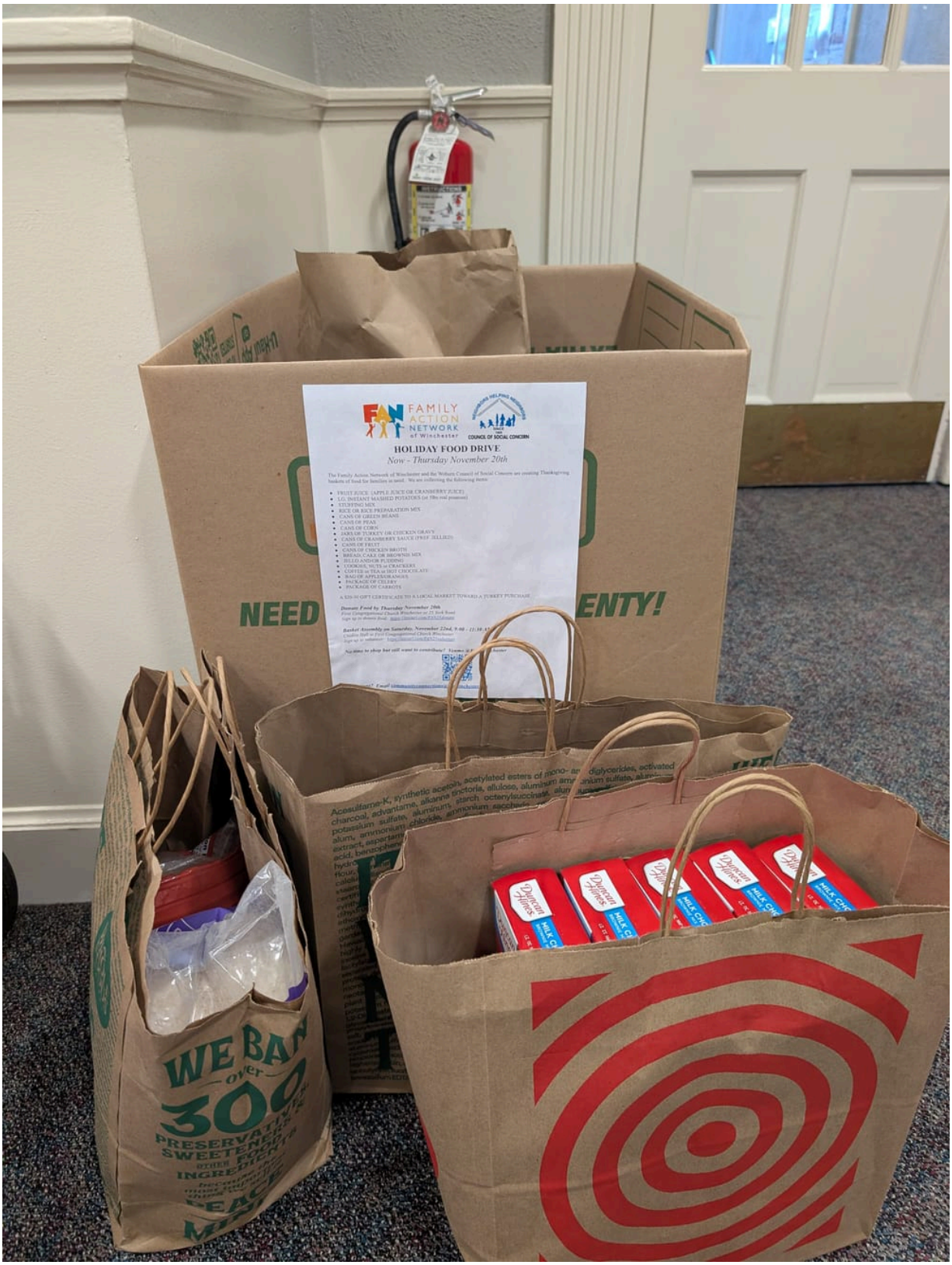

Donated food awaits sorting. PHOTO COURTESY/ALISA DONG

She adds they particularly need gravy, chicken broth, juice, stuffing, cranberry sauce, Jell-O, pudding, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, cookies/crackers, and canned fruit and peas.

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Donations can be left in the church's lobby. And anyone willing to donate a gift card can contact the organization at communityconnections@fanwinchester.org to get Michelle's address where they can drop off the card. Or they can send money through Venmo @FANWinchester.

In an email, Dong wrote, here's how you can help out this year:

• Donate non-perishables by Thursday, Nov. 20 to the First Congregational Church **https://tinyurl.com/FAN25donate**

• Volunteer to assemble baskets on Saturday, Nov. 22 (9–11:30 a.m.) at Chidley Hall: **https://tinyurl.com/FAN25volunteer**

Winchester resident Joyce Westner is one of the founders of Winchester News. She holds a degree in English and journalism from Northeastern University. If you have a suggestion for either a Meet the Artist or Helpers Among Us resident, email editor@winchesternews.org.

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HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us - WinPAC unites with light

On a cold and blustery day, two post-graduate Winchester High School students and others stood outside the Stop & Shop inviting folks to buy luminary kits as part of the Unite with Light event planned for Sunday, Dec. 14. The successful program was started by Mairin Norton, a high-schooler who

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November 27, 2025

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us — Coaches volunteer to bring on the cheer

You probably know that cheerleaders appear at sporting events to cheer on their teams, but you might not know that cheerleading is a sport in its own right. Or that Winchester Cheer coaches volunteer to help girls and boys learn and compete in cheerleading. Middlesex Street resident Erin Black is

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November 14, 2025

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us - Patti Reilly wants your children's clothes

Although Patti Reilly opened her boutique, Jules, about a year and a half ago, she's already discovered the generosity of Winchester residents. That's why she and her

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us - Austin Whitman takes on the cause of Winchester's trees

Austin Whitman has the ur of serving on a non-existent committee. "I ran into I-Ching Scott [former

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husband, John, decided to offer a 10% discount on one item to anyone who brings in “gently used children’s clothing.

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November 10, 2025

Planning Board member] who introduced me to David Miller, who was on the Conservation Committee,” he says. “Miller told me that the Permanent Street Tree Committee had gone dormant.” Still, Whitman

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October 31, 2025

Latest

FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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March 4, 2026

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